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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

## INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY: Colombia

DATE: 25X1

SUBJECT: March Elections

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## 1. Electoral Laws and Regulations:

A telegraphic circular was sent to Governors, Intendants, Commissioners and Mayors on January 18 by the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Roberto Urdaneta Arbelaez, requesting compliance with the Electoral Law of 1946 which requires daily reports from local electoral juries and from inspectors of registration. Irregularities reported would be corrected by duly constituted authorities. (Bogota in Spanish to Colombia, Jan. 18, 1947).

On the eve of political rallies in Medellin and other cities of the Department of Antioquia Governor Dr. Jose Maria Bernal prohibited indefinitely political meetings of all types. (Medellin in Spanish to Colombians Abroad, Jan. 25, 1947). President Ospina Perez' preelection proclamation of March 8 addressed to Governors, Intendants, and Commissioners appeals for orderly elections and specifies that the Armed Forces, in cooperation with the police, will guarantee free balloting and a respect for the decisions of the citizens. (Bogota in Spanish to Colombia, March 8, 1947).

The Minister of War announced on March 12 that soldiers would be stationed throughout the nation to keep peace during the elections, and that "military reinforcements" had been sent to towns where political disturbances "may

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be expected." (Bogota in Spanish to North and South America, March 12, 1947). Further regulations for election day banned political gatherings near the polling places, all spoken or written propaganda, the carrying of firearms or other weapons, and the sale of alcoholic drinks. Women and children would not be allowed near the polling places. (Bogota in Spanish to South America, March 12, 1947).

Commissions of "Conciliation and Guarantee" were set up by decree on March 12 in the capitals of each province to protect citizens exercising their right of franchise. The Conservatives, the Liberals, and the Liberal Party of the People were requested to designate representatives to these three-man commissions. (Bogota in Spanish to Colombia, March 12, 1947).

2. Party Principles and Main Issues:

The Conservative Party: Dr. Laureano Gomez, leader of the party, returned from an extensive speaking tour of the country on January 15 and led what apparently was an active campaign. No political speeches were monitored, however. Disunity of the Liberal Party was one of the main themes of the Conservative press.

The Administration: President Ospina Perez, member of the Conservative Party, repeatedly stressed that the Government would maintain complete neutrality in the campaign; that it was "indifferent" to the final results of the contest, in keeping with the inalterable policy of national unity.

The Liberal Party: Dr. Eduardo Santos, leader of the party, together with Dr. Dario Echandia, launched the campaign early in January. In a keynote address Santos pointed out that "the only danger to the Liberal Party is not the Conservative Party, but the disunity" of the Liberals. Throughout the following campaign period Santistas made conciliatory overtures to the Gaitanist faction.

The Liberal Party of the People: A 52-point program drawn up at the Gaitanist Liberal Convention included the following principles: Women must be allowed to vote and hold office, democracy must be upheld, popular elections must be held for Departmental Governors and certain classes of mayors, the immigration of technicians must be organized, the land laws must be changed, health and sanitation measures must be provided, and diplomatic careers must be

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established.

In the international field the program approved the Good Neighbor policy and proclaimed the necessity of maintaining good relations with the United States of America.

(Postelection press dispatches reveal another Gaitanist policy; collaboration with the present Government).

(Bogota in Spanish Morse to the Americas, Jan. 21, 1947).

Government Dismissals: Liberals of both factions were united in opposing the replacement of Liberal public service personnel with Conservatives at the beginning of the year. For a time it was believed that the unanimous disapproval of party leaders and the combined Liberal press would lead to a reconciliation.

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Election Results: Official results announced by the United Press on March 27 are: Liberals, 789,256, of whom 442,480 were for the Gaitanist candidates and 346,776 for the official party; Conservatives, 641,155.

### 3. Postelection Developments:

Pending the announcement on March 23 of official election returns, victory was conceded to the Liberals with a majority of the vote of the Gaitanist faction of the party. The distribution of seats in the Senate and Chamber was estimated: Senate - Liberals, 35, Conservatives, 28; Chamber - Liberals, 74, Conservatives, 57. (Bogota in Spanish to North and South America, March 20, 1947).

Political Clashes: Despite a broadcast of March 16 which stated that Minister of the Interior Roberto Urdaneta Arbelaez had announced at the close of the voting that elections had taken place "in perfect order," (LRS, Buenos Aires in Spanish to Argentina, March 16, 1947) press reports of violence were quoted on the radio on March 17. EL TIEMPO -- owned by Santos -- stated that there were 150 injured and 11 dead as the result of incidents in "various regions of Colombia." (Montevideo in Spanish to Uruguay, March 17, 1947).

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Other press accounts of violence located the areas in the Department of Norino in Pasto, La Union, and Ipiales. Families reportedly were fleeing across the Ecuadorian border. (Bogota in Spanish to Latin America, March 17, 1947). (Nothing further to substantiate these reports was monitored).

A dispatch from Cali on March 24 reported the "heavy stoning" of the Conservative newspaper DIARIO DEL PACIFICO, which journal had been belittled in a report of the Liberal Governor of the Department of Valle. (Associated Press, March 24, 1947).

The Montevideo newspaper EL PAIS praised the orderly Colombian elections and stated that the "signs of normalcy" were "broken only occasionally by some individual excesses or irregularities." (Buenos Aires in Spanish Morse to Latin America, March 31, 1947).

Ministerial Crisis: In order to leave President Ospina free to reorganize the Government in accordance with the election results, the following six Ministers resigned from the Cabinet on March 25: Carlos Lozano, Foreign Affairs; Carlos Sanz de Santamaria, War; Robert Marulanda, Economy; Blas Herrera Anzoategui, Labor; Tullio Enrique Tascon, Mines; Jorge Bejarano, Health. (Bogota in Spanish Morse to Latin America, March 25, 1947). Rumors that the remaining six members, who represent the Conservative Party in the Cabinet, would resign for the same reason continue to be denied in press dispatches.

The Gaitanist publication JORNADA considered the move "logical," since the Liberal Ministers "have not only been up in the air without anything firm to stand on, but they know the clear desire of their party in regard to their presence in the Cabinet." (Bogota in Spanish Morse to Latin America, March 26, 1947). At the same time, Gaitan was reported to be maintaining a firm stand on his noncollaboration policy toward the Ospina Government.

Matters were at a standstill until after the Easter holidays, but LA RAZON reported that Liberal Ministers were prepared to break with the government if the Liberal majority is not recognized. (Bogota in Spanish Morse to South America, March 25, 1947). In announcing his departure for Europe toward the end of April, former President Santos denied that he planned to live abroad and stated that he would return in from four to six months. JORNADA quoted

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"authoritative sources" that Santos would resign as Vice President and from the leadership of the Liberal Party, thus relinquishing his power in the parliamentary majority just voted into office. (AP, March 24, 1947).

Latest reports are that "political circles believe that President Ospina Perez's cabinet will be reorganized this week. The Ministers' resignation has been pending since before Holy Week. Eduardo Zuleta Angel, who represented Colombia in the UNO, came to Bogota with an appointment as Minister of Education, but he has never taken possession of the post because of the resignation.

Among the guesses hazarded by the papers as to the likely constitution of the new cabinet, we find the supposition that Zuleta Angel will be named Foreign Minister and that Chancellor Carlos Lozano y Lozano will become Minister of Education. Authoritative persons say that nothing definite can be forecast on the new cabinet, but they believe that most of the present Ministers will be renamed." (Bogota in Spanish Morse to South America, April 8, 1947).

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